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*RESIDENCE OF MRS. CYRUS H. McCORMICK, LAKE FOREST, ILL.
Perkins, Fellows & Hamilton, Architects*

The Thirty-first Annual Architectural Exhibition

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

THE thirty-first annual architectural exhibition given jointly by the Chicago Architectural Club, the Illinois Chapter of the Chicago Society of Architects and the Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Architects with the co-operation of the Art Institute, preserved the traditions of these organizations in former years despite the fact that the war has all but put an end to building for the time being. The show was a creditable one too, of well selected and comprehensive exhibits.

Architecture has one thing in common with agriculture for, just as every man feels sure he could farm successfully, so does every man and, rather more particu-

larly, every woman, feel certain of an innate ability to plan such a home as has never been built before. As a rule too, they are right, for such dwellings not only never have been but never could be built, hence the architect. Working always with four walls and a roof one must accord to the craft a great reverence for its remarkable variations of accomplishment. Often the lay critic grows peevish and asks for new styles, an evolution, if possible, of an American school. The real wonder is, however, that there are so many good styles and that taste and learning have preserved and protected this country from the perpetuation of its earlier crudities.

One room in the galleries at this show



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George Awsumb, Architect

carried home this message. In it was a collection of photographs of Chicago architecture from the first rough log cabin of the early pioneers to the skyscraper of the loop and country home of the fashionable suburb of today. Here indeed was food for reflection. The early log cabin was not without its architectural claim. Here was an honest simplicity, a use of rugged material near at hand and in complete harmony with the environment and the life of the cabin dwellers. One photograph in particular of a log house with elk horns over the door and a prairie schooner at one side had all the grace, harmony and elements of composition of a true work of art.

After that came the plain store front and gable house with an "L" with an occasional beautiful and stately example of the dignified colonial. Of these the latter only possesses any architectural interest. It is indeed the classic style of America, bor-

rowed from English Georgian, which, in turn, had received it from antiquity by way of Italy. In the course of its travels the Colonial style has evolved by modification into something frank, fine and beautiful, with the chaste nobility of Greece in construction, the elegance, grace and charm of Italy and France in ornament, restrained by the English love of reserve and sense of dignity and enriched by Britain's understanding of the true nature and requirements of home. Transplanted to the Colonies it took on an honest and straightforward simplicity as of some great Democrat who, while a king among men, is still a man among men.

We may well pause here to pay our tribute and acknowledge our debt in general to the English for the delightful domestic architecture which they have given the world. True, in the beginning, motifs and styles were borrowed but always, fortunately, from the right sources, chiefly



"LINDEN LODGE" Country House of O. B. Englisch, Esq., Kankakee, Ill.
S. S. Beman, Architect

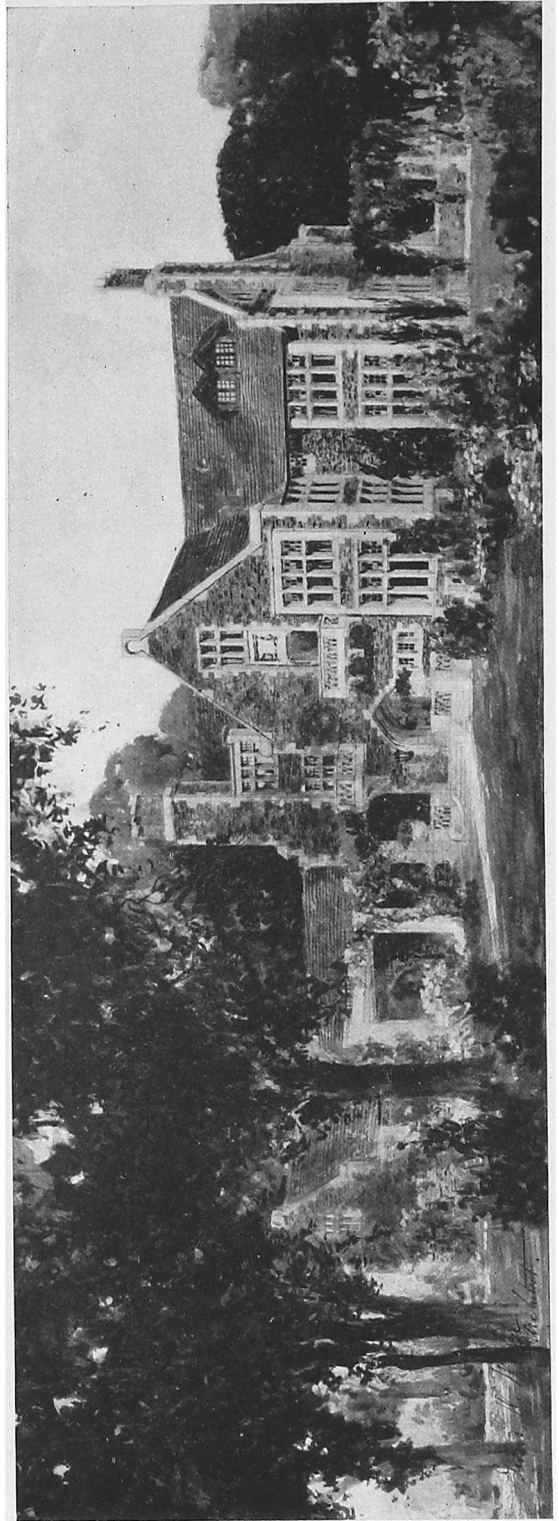
Italian and Dutch. In this borrowing the English were quite true to their principles as expressed in the words on the frieze under the dome of the National Academy: "The works of those who have stood the test of ages are worthy to command that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend." Thus the lovely Italian doorways were adopted by British builders, not entire but with dignified variations that gave them added attraction and made them as inviting as the arms of an easy chair. Their cornice motifs, balconies and other bits of ornament also were retained for their grace and elegance. From the Dutch the English borrowed the gambrel roof, directed by a true taste which recognized the agreeable break against the sky which this roof provided in the country. England combined and adopted both schools in forms of domestic architecture which are replete with the spirit of home and adorned with all the graces consistent with a simple but elegant manner of living.

Superceding the Colonial came many forms of bastard architecture to disfigure streets of old Chicago. One often wonders indeed if the great Fire may not have been a blessing in disguise when one observes the examples of building of that time still extant in other localities. The early Victorian essays into complicated French fashions have, as a rule, little to recommend them. So, too, the frightful clutters of gables, bay windows and cupolas of yet a bit later. Out of all this welter of the over-ornate, much betrimmed and accidentally designed there arises now and then something not altogether bad, something which, under the magic touch of time, grows mellow, quaint and, at last, even classic. Such a landmark is the old Palmer House with its reminiscent suggestion of some French palace of the sixties. With all its crudity of ornament who could wish it removed, remodeled or destroyed? What an oasis it is in the otherwise oppressive modernity of State Street. Its good, grey,

time-stained, weather-beaten look, the pigeons nestling over its lofty doorways with the luxuriously beautiful female figures that surmount them, are all that the whole street offers of the romance and the splendors of dead days. If some one would do a sympathetic etching of this theme it would be a most fascinating note in any architectural exhibition.

Perhaps the next most important development in local architecture was the impetus given by Richardson to the brutal Romanesque style adapted from the work of the Normans in France. He has left his impress on the fashionable districts of the South Side and Lake Shore Drive for generations to come no doubt, and those things which he did himself will be worthy of preservation, as the MacVeagh home, the Glessner home, the wholesale house of Marshall Field and Company, et cetera. Other men of lesser spirit, however, essayed this mode with small success, employing its large units of rough stone in buildings that were too small or too complicated for such treatment. These latter efforts, as a result, lack character, being devoid of all continuity of design and they are often further deficient by reason of the fact that their builders did not demand the absolute perfection of workmanship which put the final touch of distinction on the work of Richardson. Root and Whitehouse were the most successful workers in this style next to its original master.

With Root we come to the golden days of the great World's Fair and the mighty influence upon architecture which this event wielded the country over. Root was originally selected to head the great college of architects who planned the buildings of the Fair. His death in the early stages of the work necessitated a new appointment as chief designer and this honor fell to Charles B. Atwood. To him must be given credit for the classical Greco-Roman dream of the great exposition. The collonades and cornices of Greek temples, the dome which



George W. Maher, Architect

RESIDENCE FOR THE LATE MR. R. W. SEARS, OAK PARK, ILL.

was the proud contribution of the Imperial City were to be seen everywhere throughout the famous exhibition buildings in all their classic purity and often united in a design of great nobility and grace.

Of about this period too, are the Sullivan buildings, of which the Auditorium is an example. These may always be recognized by an intricate ornamentation in iron or stone which would have been better applied in the interior. Many hold indeed that this man's greatest genius was for such ornament and that his abilities were those of an interior decorator rather than a builder.

Following these we have the modern steel skeleton skyscrapers, resplendent with windows, the English country homes and the Chicago style bungalow effects with wide over-hanging eaves and plain cornice seen at their best in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. Here there creeps in the Oriental suggestion, a note reminiscent of Japan. Then there are our country clubs in the Moorish fashion which came from the Pacific slope by way of Spain, and our Universities in the purest of English Gothic. Both have been criticized, and we believe unjustly, for a lack of originality. On the ground of appropriateness there could be no criticism for the Spanish style is consistent with a playtime mood, being festal and romantic in suggestion. Our universities, on the other hand, are devoted to the handing down of the culture and traditions of an English speaking people. It is but fitting that their buildings should declare the source of our literature, law and civilization, a source of which we are indeed most proud.

Reverting to the World's Fair and its influence on the future aspect of Chicago one must not forget the Chicago Beautiful Plan,

worked out by D. H. Burnham and done in exquisite drawings by Jules Guerin. Anyone who is at all familiar with those well-known features which have appeared so often in this magazine cannot fail to notice the connection once it is pointed out.

Of present-day Chicago there is much to be said architecturally. In such edifices as the University Club and the Michigan Boulevard Building, Michigan Avenue has real additions to its building treasures. Here, too, let us pause to call attention to a structure which, while not very recent, is yet one of the best examples extent of the proper planning and adornment of the modern skyscraper, the Reliance Building on the southwest corner of State and Washington Streets. Here is an ideal arrangement of windows, interesting, well-balanced and affording the utmost amount of light. Here, too, is a consistent and harmonious use of flat ornament throughout that results in a complete and satisfying effect of unity.

This is a thing often overlooked in the construction of a skyscraper. Too many builders concern themselves with facing up the first two or three stories in material that is easily cleaned, providing ornament along the street level and stunning cornices at the top with nothing between to tie the two into one complete scheme. Of the propensity to introduce washable material in the lower stories one can only say that it is a sad concession to an inherited housewifely instinct let us hope of the shopkeeper, not the architect. It would be in better taste to let the dew and damp, the smoke and dust, the frost and sunshine add that adorable patine of time which so far surpasses all of man's achievements in the production of tone.